

The MIDLAND

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AND IN THE END

UPTON TERRELL

Quanah is thinking.

Sitting alone in the house on his little rancho beside the Rio Nambe he is thinking.

I have a rancho, these good sixty acres beside the Rio Nambe. Around me I have all the hills and the mountains wrapped in trees and grass and flowers. I have the little streams which trickle from the high snows down to me bringing life and wild happy music. I have horses to carry me and do my work. I have an automobile which is not as dependable as the horses, a sort of helpless thing . . . but I have it. I have cows wandering where they will over the hills. And in my fields the earth bursts with goodness from the seed I plant.

I have a house in which there is comfort and warmth. I have Margerita my little daughter who brings to my ears sunlit childish laughter and the feel of tiny hands upon my rough face. I have an old Mexican woman Maria to keep my house.

I had Julia until two years ago.

I wonder what it is that makes a man think as I think. Is it only because I am lonely? I have all these things . . . yet each night I think about myself, of what has gone, of what is here. I have no peace of mind any more. Sometimes . . . sometimes I don't believe I can go on. Have I lost all courage, or am I only unable to forget, to stop wanting things I have lost?

Loneliness, sadness, desire . . . is it one of these things which makes me so unhappy when I am rich?

Tomorrow I shall find out. Tomorrow I shall go to Santa Fe.

Quanah laughs when little Margerita's doll falls from the wagon. Margerita laughs, too, for she thinks it is funny to have seen Papoose tumble from sight over the dashboard.

Quanah stops the team and gets out. But he

does not laugh when he picks up Papoose, dust-covered, torn and broken by a wheel.

Margerita does not cry at once. Tears are always slow in coming to her eyes. She takes the mortally wounded Papoose in tender hands and stares at it, her small slender face fixed in an expression of mingled fear and dismay.

Quanah starts the team again, trying not to look at her or at the doll. He says nothing, only clicks to the horses. His eyes run across the great sweep of dry sunlit mesa ahead to the purple mountains, but as if drawn by an irresistible force they come back to her.

She tries bravely to replace Papoose's interior and to hold the cracked china head together beneath the smooth obsidian hair. But Papoose is beyond possible repair. And she covers her face and leans against Quanah's strong arm.

He prepares a cigarette with thick brown fingers, holding the lines between his knees as he twists the brown paper about the tobacco. When he has blown smoke he speaks softly to her.

"Don't cry . . . Now, Papoose was very old. You needed a new doll. When we get to Santa Fe we'll get one."

She only draws a deep breath and her lips quiver.

But he understands that she is saying to him that she does not want a new doll.

"I know the store," he goes on, knowing that his words will do little to improve the situation. "It's right on the Plaza. You have never seen such fine dolls as they have there. Lola will go with us to buy it."

She takes up Papoose to her breast, covering the limp form in protective arms, and sits on the wagon seat looking across the great brown plain, tears in which the spring sunlight glistens still welling in her eyes.

He finds only silence, although he searches for more words. But words come in time for himself

alone to hear, strange words which seem to awaken a slight feeling of apprehension in him: *the sharpness of pain is dulled by the lights and shadows of moons and suns and stars which come and go across the sky, and in the end one does not remember it as it really was.*

He sees far ahead a faint film of smoke which he knows stands up above Santa Fe. The words trouble him still . . . they were to console Margerita in her sadness. Yet, no words ever had consoled him!

He looks at the smoke again. And then suddenly he wishes he were in his automobile so that he could race toward it, reach it quickly. Words of thought have done no end of good for him, given him unlimited consolation! What would he have done without them? Words . . . long he has stood, reasoning with the simplicity of an Indian, saying with words of thought: this hand points toward the east, this hand toward the west, and I am between not knowing which to follow.

And the lights and shadows of moons and suns and stars which have crossed the sky have made him forget things as they really were. He only remembers them as he likes to remember them.

And tomorrow he will not remember them at all, for tomorrow he will have Lola to make him forget.

When they reach the city he drives directly to Lola's house. She is surprised to see that he has come in a wagon.

"Couldn't get down to the main road in a car," he explains as if he were a little embarrassed by the fact that he has come to call on her in such poor style on such an important occasion. "The ranch road is a sink hole with the Nambe running right down the middle of part of it." He thinks then that she is not one to care about style in such an event. She is too glad he has come . . . But his rising assurance is dampered somewhat by the quick thought that she does not know that this visit is more important than any he has made in the past! He goes on with forced enthusiasm, the little feeling of apprehension again pervading him. "Spring has come for sure! I've never seen snow melt so fast as it has the past week. And I have four blue burro colts!"

She laughs. And then she sees that Margerita's eyes are red and swollen. "Why, what's the matter?" she asks with anxious concern.

He smiles a little awkwardly and winks. "We

had an accident. Papoose got run over."

Margerita closes her eyes again, pressing a tear onto a red cheek. Lola takes her at once into the house, and he stands watching after them with a feeling of gratification. How much like a mother Lola can act! Then he turns his attention to the impatient team, and when he has unhitched and tied them so they can feed on the hay in the wagon bed he goes inside.

In the evening he and Lola drive in her car out beyond the town and follow an old woodhauler's road across the hills until they come onto a great flat table land overlooking the valley. She stops the car, and at once the stillness of the range wild descends upon them. A night bird calls, and the metal of the hot motor cracks as it cools. There is no other sound under the silvery fumes of the stars wafting across the desert heaven. He looks away at the dim shadow of the mountains and he feels the freshness of stirring air and he catches the scents of new vegetation and the ever-present incomparable fragrance of the sage.

. . . And there are two hands, one saying go this way, and the other beckoning him the opposite direction, and he knows this is the moment when he must follow one or the other, with no turning back.

He leans close to her to speak, but he sees her face carved out of starlight and he dwells on its threaded lines and the silver-spun shadows of her hair. Then he speaks very softly.

"For a long time you have known that I loved you."

She turns her head to look into his face, and he sees lights in her eyes. But she does not answer. She looks away again, and the threaded lines are more delicate than before.

"I want you to marry me . . . if you will." He does not wait for her to reply, but as if he is certain of what she will say he goes on. "I know you understand why I have not asked you before. You know I have been thinking of it all these months. I have wondered if you would be happy with us, if Margerita and I would be happy. Only that has kept me back. Now I know we will all be happy."

She does not ask him what has made him certain, but if she had he would have said the lights and shadows of the suns and moons and stars which come and go across the sky. And he only thinks she knows, all this time she has been wondering as he, thinking as he.

The bird calls again, and she seems to be listen-

ing. Then there is only the stillness of the range wild . . . nothing to break the peace of the earth and of their understanding.

In the early summer morning he rides away from the ranch. He is going to ride far across the hills to look after his cows, to see their fatness and to mark any new calves.

He rides with strength in his long body, his hands feeling the power of bright sunlight and cool morning wind. He sits alert in his saddle astride the spirited black horse, knowing the gladness of living to breathe and fight and think.

Thinking of late has increased his strength and his will to accomplish, for his thoughts have held no sadness, no loneliness. He has found in his house each night a new comfort, a voice to answer his, one to love him, to help him. He stands no more between two hands not knowing which to follow.

When he gains the crest of the mesa beyond the corrals he looks back upon his rancho beside the Rio Nambe. He considers the fields showing the first tinge of amber which warns of the approaching harvest, the emerald and gold flowing like a mixed sea against the turning hills beyond.

He sees that Lola and Margerita have come out of the house to the flower garden beside the dooryard. Once more flowers grow in his garden. None have grown there since those which bloomed after Julia had died. He had not planted any the following year. Once in the next spring he had taken the spade and started toward the garden, but he had turned back. The Mexican woman was too lazy, perhaps too tired to plant flowers for some one else and she had her own garden to care for, beside her little adobe down the road, for her husband would have nothing to do with such work, or with any other if he could avoid it.

Lola grows flowers for him . . . again. Lola will always grow flowers for him. And he forgets that he is riding to look after his cows as he dwells on her and their life together on the rancho. The days have gone smoothly away, disappearing over the Jemez in the west in the purple dusk of summer evenings. Life runs smoothly as the Rio Grande below San Felipe, following its own path . . . into oblivion. Thinking makes the days brighter, the nights softer in scented starlight. Thinking . . . now . . . lifts him above the very earth and lets him see down into

the full fields. Life is once more as it was when Julia . . .

He stops himself suddenly. There must be no comparing the two women in his mind, in word or thought. Not once has he permitted himself to think they are alike or different. Not once has he allowed himself to think that Lola is like Julia in this way and Julia was like Lola in that way. For they are incomparable . . . they are incomparable . . . he must say that until he can say nothing else. They are two different women, living two different lives, reacting to the same influences, the same environments, the same forces in different ways. And this is enough of such thinking. Lola is never to be Julia. Lola . . . Lola . . . the name strikes warmth to his heart, it sends greater strength than ever to his body. And once more he is riding across the hills, alert in his saddle astride the black, his hand firm on the reins, his eyes eager, bright with expectancy and his blood coursing with the goodness of living.

It is almost dusk when he returns to the rancho. He is carrying a small calf on his saddle. He goes into the corral where two milk cows are waiting, impatient and wondering, for it is past the time of milking.

He laughs as he dismounts, and speaks to one of the cows. "Now here is the best milking machine in the world. I can not milk you like this little fellow."

He holds up the calf to let her sniff at it. She is at once excited and nervous. He places the calf beside her.

"Now, he has no mammy, and you have too much milk, more than we need. See, he is hungry!"

But the cow turns quickly and pushes the calf away with her head. She will not let it suckle. He tries again and again, but the cow will have no sympathy for the orphan. At last he takes a pail and starts to milk the cow and she is calm. He milks with one hand, holding the calf with the other. Quietly he places the calf under the cow. It begins to suckle. The cow appears unsuspecting. But when he stops milking she discovers the trick and gives the calf a blow with her efficient head. He laughs and takes up the calf and bucket and goes away.

"You won't object in time," he says to the cow. "Pretty soon you'll think the calf is your own."

Lola has his supper waiting. He is hungry, for he has not eaten since morning, and he sits down

at once rubbing his hands in anticipation. Presently Lola brings a pie and places it before him. Her face is flushed with expectancy.

"Pie!" he exclaims. "You have never made pie before!"

She is delighted at his enthusiasm. She cuts a generous slice, scooping up red berry juice with a spoon.

"I discovered the berries in the storeroom this afternoon," she says, trying to speak casually. "I didn't know we had them. Then I thought I would make a pie. Only once before in my life did I ever make pie, and that was years ago."

He tastes it eagerly. His hand hesitates only a moment as he swallows it and takes a second bite. He does not look at her.

"It is good," he says quickly. He begins to gulp it and soon finishes the piece. "Fine," he says in a voice extraordinarily loud.

"Will you have another piece?"

He coughs, then tells her hurriedly: "There is a cow to milk. Tomorrow. Save it for tomorrow. I've got to go out and see to the calf I brought in."

He takes his hat and hurriedly leaves the house. He walks out beyond the corrals and sits down on a log. Presently he prepares a cigarette. He sits smoking and looking off across the mesa to the mountains in dim shadow under the bright-

ening stars. The taste of very bad pastry lingers in his mouth.

He does not go to look at the calf, but he thinks about it. He thinks of other things, too. A multitude of thoughts come surging into his mind.

He thinks of Papoose and of the new doll he bought for Margerita in Santa Fe, of how she carries it about with her, takes it to her bed, sings to it, and always thinks of Papoose.

He thinks of the cow and the orphan calf.

He thinks of Julia.

And of Lola.

And then out of the multitude of spinning thoughts he finds one, old with repeating: *the sharpness of pain is dulled by the lights and shadows of moons and suns and stars which come and go across the sky, and in the end one does not remember it as it really was.*

He says to himself the only words of consolation he can find in his search among all the words he knows, that perhaps the time has not come yet, the time when he will not remember.

Margerita will not always suffer the memory of Papoose as Papoose was. The cow will accept the strange calf. And Lola . . . Lola will be Julia in his thoughts and in his heart. And perhaps she even will learn to make pastry as Julia made it.

A SMALL MATTER

KENNETH C. RANDALL

For ten years now Leon Kellog had hayed twice — on his own farm and at his mother's place. Each summer he hired extra hands and pushed the work at home, so that when his neighbors were in the midst of it, his fields lay clean and yellow and his barn stood full to the roof. To accomplish this he and his family and his hired men worked drivingly from sunrise until dew fell on the fields. Other folks in Granby set an easier pace, paused for the Fourth of July celebration and ball game at the Center, for the annual church picnic that came a week later. Leon Kellog was not seen at these events, nor was his family; and out of the succession of men who had worked these years for him, only one, an improvident but fiery-tempered fellow, had dared ask off. Going in the teeth of Kellog's angry refusal had later cost this man his job. He talked about

Kellog afterwards, at Bell's store and at Peter's smithy, eloquent bitter talk that made the heads there wag knowingly. Hired hands had talked before of haying time at Leon Kellog's, giving the gossips something to mull over — tales of tasks set that made a man work far into the evening and on Sundays, of hard words over these tasks, of brutality to horses.

Each year his wife and his two daughters, the latter now old enough to realize their father's mania, begged him to relax, to set a pace less killing. But Kellog remained deaf to their entreaties. They might have saved their breath, for he was like a man possessed of a spirit out of his control. And as the years went by he grew, at this season, increasingly difficult to live with, uncertain as to temper, a man turned bitter and morose, capable of brooding silences, black rages,

unreasonable acts when things went wrong.

He was not one to talk about his troubles. Not even Anna Kellog, married to him twenty years, realized what a little thing was that which irked her husband so unbearably and drove him to such desperate labor. Deep under the crust of hardness that was his, he could not bear to be the last man in Granby to finish haying. The fact that he worked two large farms, performed twice the labors of his neighbors, did not alter, for him, the bitterness of knowing that they were through and at their cultivating again while he still hayed it.

Each year it was his custom the evening he finished work on the home place to call on his brother Homer at the Center and ask his help while working for their mother. And so this night at dusk, driving into his brother's yard, Leon Kellog saw Homer on the porch steps sucking a straw and smiling in a dry way that always angered the older man. Five years separated these brothers, but Homer looked ten years the younger. They were Yankees, tall, lean, leathery, but Leon was a worker and a driver, while Homer preferred to set an easier pace, working a small farm in the village, trading whenever opportunity arose in land and cattle and horses, business that gained him a living by his wits. The report was that he was snugly fixed. Certainly he had time for gunning in the fall and trout fishing in May; time to devote to playing ball with the younger men on days of celebration at the Center.

He came forward now, cool looking in a faded blue shirt and overalls, and leaned his arms negligently on the door of Leon's car. Neither spoke for a moment as though waiting for the other to begin. Into the elder's mind, harried as it was by the strain of the past three weeks, came the thought that Homer was baiting him purposely.

The younger man said at last: "Finished haying yet, Lee?"

"Yes," Leon told him shortly, "and I've come to ask if you can come down to mother's and begin there tomorrow."

Homer sucked at the straw between his teeth.

"Been wet this year, ain't it?" he suggested. "Most of us at the Center have mowed away hay that's pretty black." He went on easily. "I'll have to come a day late this year, Lee. Fred Wheeler died last week. Havin' an auction tomorrow up at his place on Pelham Mountain. S'I to Della tonight, s'I'll drive over there and look at the young stock."

Leon Kellog, crouched behind the wheel of the Ford, shifted in his seat and his eyes sparkled. Against the chill that lurks on Hollow Hill road even in midsummer, he had slipped over his outer shirt a discarded suit coat of black wool material; a flat wool cap, once black but whitened now with cow hairs, shielded his face and sat like a top-knot over his beaked nose giving him the look of a huge and angry bird.

"Hate to be put off this way, Homer," he said sharply. "I'm behind this year. I was countin' on you to help."

"I'll be over the next day," Homer told him. "Looks like a dry spell comin'. You mow all day tomorrow and we'll make things fly on Friday."

"There's a lot of hand mowin' to be done," Leon persisted. "I need you to help with that."

Homer shook his head.

"That auction won't wait," he said, "and the hay will. One day don't hurt any with good weather comin' all next week."

"It ain't right," said his brother darkly, "I should put in my time and that of two men while you loaf around on Pelham mountain at an auction."

"Why don't you come with me then?" Homer suggested. "Take a day off. It'll do you good, Lee. Sort of improve your disposition."

His sharp eyes twinkled as he said this, but Leon's face reddened under its leathery tan.

"I wouldn't quite say as you was the one to criticize, Homer. Not and act as you do."

"How's that?" the other asked.

Leon Kellog said in a barking voice: "I'll let you figure that out while I'm sweatin' down in the swamp tomorrow and you're on Pelham Mountain taking your ease."

Homer was a temperate man and now held his anger back. When he spoke it was of another matter.

"Wish the home place was off our hands, Lee," he said. "Rud Ferry was tellin' me last week how Roy Fuller was gettin' married and lookin' for a place. Rud said he thought Roy's father would give him the cash for it."

Leon said nothing and he continued: "I sort of look for mother to sell and come here to the Center to live. She and the girls would like it here where they'd be near to church and the store."

"I don't look for her to give up the old place," said Leon. "Your mother's too old to want to move."

"Can't tell," said Homer. "Mother's pretty spry except for her rheumatism. She's often said lately . . ."

But his brother cut him short.

"We ain't gettin' anywhere with this talk," he exclaimed impatiently. "You ain't changed your mind about comin' down tomorrow?"

Homer shook his head.

"Don't see how I can come till Friday, Lee," he said.

Leon Kellog made a curious sound of exasperation deep in his throat.

"I'll be gettin' along then," he muttered.

Homer tried once more to mollify him.

"Stay a spell, Lee," he said equably, "We had ice cream for supper and I guess there's half a freezer-full left."

"No," Leon told him shortly, "I'll get along."

He trod on the starter and the motor churned and rattled. Homer said something more, but Leon pretended not to hear. He swung the car sharply on the gravel circle before his brother's door step and headed toward the main road.

Dark had fallen, but as he crossed the flats a summer moon soared over the trees, flooding the fields on either side with its soft pallor. From a short rise that topped the bottom lands he could see ahead of him his mowing, clean and white, swelling gently to the hill pasture at the back. There was romantic beauty in this scene, but Leon Kellog felt none of it. A quick thrust of pride went through him; he was well along this year in spite of showery weather, which had caused others in town to lag behind. All along the road that he had just traversed was standing grass, some of it matted down by rain. But insistently came a second thought that he had his mother's haying yet to do, a task harder than the one just finished, for the land down there was wet, with wide stretches of bog meadow and swamp bottom unsafe to put a team on. This grass he knew would have to be mowed down by hand and carried out by hand and spread to dry on the knolls above. Hard labor, slow and tedious; labor that could not be pushed or quickened greatly, no matter how sharp a man's impatience. In his own yard he thought again of Homer and his refusal, and he felt a quick bitter rage that caused him to jam on the brakes and bring the car to a racking halt under the wagon shed.

Removing his shoes in the kitchen he noticed that Anna had set out a bowl of crackers and milk on the table. This late meal was a habit with him

during haying, an evening rite sacred to his peace of mind. Gloomily he drew up to the bowl and began to eat. The cold milk soothed his mouth which these days felt dry and parched; he could hear voices coming from the front hall. Anna and the girls were sitting on the door step to escape the heat that stayed on after sundown in the house.

Footsteps sounded in the hall and dining room and Anna Kellog came into the kitchen. She was a short woman, grown dumpy with the years, and her brown hair worn in an old fashioned pompadour was threaded with silver. Twenty years before she had been a school teacher, a girl slim and pretty and full of life. She had worked hard in this house, ceaselessly performing a round of narrow duties. But these had not broken her spirit. She was for Granby a well read woman; her eyes had in them an intelligent light that had never faded to the patient dullness marking the faces of many farmers' wives.

"Mr. Mathews called while you were gone," she said. "He can't come this week."

Kellog looked up sharply, his spoon half way to his mouth.

"Mathews can't come," he repeated. "Why can't he come?"

"Mrs. Mathews had a bad spell after supper," Anna went on. "He don't dare leave her alone."

Leon Kellog put down his spoon and pushed the bowl away. His eyes fixed upon his wife had a bright glitter in them.

"Come now, Leon," she said soothingly, "don't look at me like that. I'm not Dell Mathews."

"If you was," he told her, "you'd get a piece of my mind. The shirking skunk. He'll be in the yard to borrow before the month's over, but he won't stay long in it."

"You'll feel different when you're not so tired," said Anna. "Finish your milk and go along to bed."

She threw open the door and looked out across the fields.

"My, it's close; it's going to be a scorcher tomorrow."

Leon Kellog, brooding in his chair, made no reply, and Anna turned and looked at him.

"You'll have Homer and Tony to help. Maybe Mrs. Mathews will get to feeling stronger before the week's over and then Mr. Mathews can leave her."

"Homer's not coming tomorrow," said Leon in a hard dry voice that rasped in the room.

"What's the matter with him?" Anna asked.

"Says he's got to go to an auction up in Pelham. Men don't like to work for nothing; not such as Dell and Homer anyhow."

His voice was so bitter that it stirred Anna Kellog to say: "I wish your mother and the girls would give up that big place and come to the Center to live. The extra work down there is enough to kill a man. You've let it wear on your nerves, Leon. I don't like to see you worn out before your time on work there's no real need for. If your mother and the girls would sell there'd be enough to live on. Why don't you have Homer see if he can't get a buyer for the place?"

She had made this suggestion before and was not surprised when Kellog made no reply.

Presently he got stiffly up, and she saw how old he looked and pitied him. She knew him now for what he was, knew his hard closeness, his driving ways when work was put before him. She knew also his inflexible code of honor lodged in a sense of duty. In these long years under his roof the feeling that had drawn her as a girl to marry him had died; yet in its place had grown a stronger one, formed out of pity and respect.

She heard him moving about in the bedroom, heard the bed creak with his weight. Standing there quiet, listening, she thought she heard him groan like a man driven beyond his strength.

A bar of moonlight pure as fine silver crossed the floor and drew her out into the yard where a pale and beautiful radiance made unreal all the familiar prosaic objects of her daily life. Only the black peaked wall of the great barn at her back maintained its true proportion. And suddenly, as though its shadow held a sinister reality from which she might never escape, she shuddered, and almost ran into the house where the task of setting tomorrow's bread awaited her.

The morning found Leon Kellog at his mother's place. He did not stop at the house, although he had not seen his mother and two sisters for a month, but drove on down the road to the mowing. There he unhitched his team and rehitched them to the mower that he had drawn behind the wagon. Tony, his Polish hired man, helped him, and then he set Tony to the task of mowing out corners of the stone wall surrounding the upper field. This part of the mowing was high land that sloped off gradually toward the marsh. Despite the wet season the crop here was not heavy; the grass, thin and over-ripe, was almost too light to cut, so badly had the land run down since his

father's death. Yet where the swamp began the grass was green, and Kellog knew from other years that it would be heavy and rank.

He surveyed again the acres of grass about him, these upper fields crossed by crumbling walls and studded here and there with tall old elms. Farther to his right an orchard stood, the old trees long unproductive, massed with sucker shoots and laden with the brown nests of worms lodged in the upper branches. Here the land was rolling and irregular. Huge boulders lay matted in ancient grass and the stretches between them, he again reflected, were thin and light and hardly worth the cutting. Yet the work had to be done. The land had to be gone over slowly with mower, and tedder, and rake. The thin yield of short hay, so difficult to pitch from the windrow, had to be laboriously loaded on the cart and drawn to the barn more than half a mile away.

All morning under a stifling sun he mowed in the upper fields, forcing his team until they were dark with sweat and lathered under the harness. And at noon he unhitched and drove them to the house. As he came into the kitchen he saw his sisters bending over the wood stove, preparing the noon meal. They looked up sharply and spoke to him, and Jennie, the elder of these two angular old maids, brought a separate towel for the hired man and stood by him while he soused his head in the wash basin at the sink. Hired men made Jennie nervous; she allowed them slight latitude when in her kitchen.

"We're about ready to sit," she said to Leon. "Mother's in the other room. She ain't felt able to get out of her chair all morning."

Leon dried his hands and face on the roller towel beside the sink. The girls were busy again at the stove dishing up vegetables and he stepped into the dining room where his mother sat in the bow window awaiting him. She was a big woman with white hair and a strong tanned face. Her hands lying idle on the arms of her rocker were swollen with rheumatism, but as yet the disease had not beaten her. She still had hopes of conquering it and her eyes held none of the sweetly patient look common to cripples.

"Help me up, Lee," she said briskly. "It's in my knee today."

Leon steadied her to her feet and she reached for the stout crooked stick hung on the rocker back.

"I can manage it now," she said, and began a grim progress to her chair at the head of the long

table. "I put an extra leaf in expectin' more men to dinner. Where's Homer and Dell Mathews?"

"Dell ain't comin' and Homer not until tomorrow," Leon told her. He would have said more in the bitterness that welled up in him, but his mother noticed Tony standing awkwardly in the doorway and broke sharply in.

"Have your man sit here, Leon," she said, "and you sit over at the end. I've got to have the girls near me to help serve and pass things."

They ate a fine chicken dinner in a silence broken by the brisk orders of old Mrs. Kellog to her daughters, and questions put to her son as to the stand of grass in the upper and lower meadows. Leon answered briefly. He was anxious to finish eating that he might grind Tony's scythe and retouch the knives of the mower dulled by the morning's work. He made as if to get up from table, but his mother stopped him.

"Sit still, Leon," she said. "You ain't had your pie."

"I ain't hungry for it," he told her. "I'll get along and grind a spell while the team's restin', if Tony'll turn for me."

His harsh gaze rested on his hired man who got up without delay and went out into the yard.

"You sit still," his mother said again. "I want to talk to you. Land sakes, I ain't seen you for a month and now you eat and run like a man possessed. Mabel, just put a piece of your early apple pie on Leon's plate; he'll eat it."

Mabel hastened to obey, and Leon set fork in the flaky stuff and chewed it dourly.

His mother watched him.

"That ain't no way to eat pie as good as that," she said. "What's come over you, Lee? You used to like your victuals."

Leon did not meet her accusing eyes.

"The hot weather's robbed me of my appetite," he replied evasively.

"It ain't that," his mother said shrewdly, "it's your unholy desire to get on with the work. I've noticed it other years. And I see it start today. Ten years ago you'd have stopped at the house before going to the fields. Today you drove right by without even a look at the window where I was sittin'. And this noon I never saw a team so hard put to it as yours. That bay colt was black with sweat and drippin' lather at every step. You'll kill those horses, Leon, workin' 'em so hard this kind of weather."

"They'll stand it, I guess," Leon said harshly. "When those that promise to come don't keep

their word, the rest have to make up for their shirkin' of the job, even the dumb critters."

He stood up and turned toward the door.

"I've got that grindin' to attend to," he said again.

His mother made as if to speak but held back her words. And Leon went on through the kitchen, his thoughts bent on the work at hand filling the afternoon.

Out in the white blaze of sun-baked yard there was no air stirring. The grindstone stood under a great dusty maple that filtered the glare into flecks of burning light. Tony had filled the water box and now turned while Leon sharpened. They worked in silence. Tony's flat face was sullen and Leon's expressionless as they bent to this task. Sweat poured from them and stained their blue shirts across the back; the hot bright metal under their hands scoured shrilly on the stone, which threw off a warm and sickish odor.

In the field, bending to reset the knife, Leon squinted up at the sun and decided to leave work on the upper fields and mow nearer the swamp, taking advantage of the terrific heat to dry this heavier grass. The horses approached the swamp edge gingerly, and once they stopped dead and attempted to swing away toward higher ground. Leon spoke sharply, forcing them ahead. The near horse, a squat, powerful buckskin, obeyed, sinking in over his hocks and throwing up clods of wet muck with a sucking sound; but the bay colt on the off side refused to pull, rolling his eyes and shying to one side. Leon reined the colt in tight and holding him in line beat him unmercifully with a stub of whip. The colt reared and plunged, but Leon had a check bit on him, and he did not struggle long. Presently he stood trembling and Leon struck him again and again and spoke harshly to him. Great welts showed on the colt's back where the whip had cut in.

They went on across the meadow, the bay now doing his share of the work, the heavier buckskin sinking at every step, straining gallantly to keep his feet out of the tar-like muck. They struck hidden bogs and the mower jolted cruelly, at times threatening to throw Kellog from his seat. Once around and then again, and again — under a fierce sun that drew clouds of hot sweetness from the green swaths. So heavy was the grass that Tony had to help by forking back each round to prevent the knife from clogging.

Leon paused to breathe the horses and Tony, working just ahead, paused too and said to him:

"This work hard on team, Mister Kellog. Soft place ahead. Maybe I better mow her down by hand."

But Kellog shook his head.

"They'll go through," he said.

"I work for you t'ree years now, Mister Kellog," Tony protested. "You never go in swamp so far and this has been one wet year."

"Takes too long to mow by hand, Tony," Leon said. "When we ain't got the help we've got to do the next best thing."

He spoke to the horses and they started forward gingerly. Five rods on the buckskin went in to his knees. Leon struck him with the whip and the beast, startled and frightened, jumped his way out. He stood presently on harder ground trembling, spattered with black ooze, so that his tawny hide showed dappled through great stains of dirt and sweat.

"You kill that Fred horse, Mister Kellog," Tony said. "Him good worker, but you give him more than horse can stand."

"Keep your mouth quiet, Tony," Leon said harshly. "Get on with your work."

He had stopped in the very center of the field. Ahead of him the swaths stretched like a shimmering green road. No air stirred, and the two-o'clock sun made of the meadow a veritable furnace in which heat waves danced fantastically, blurring his vision. The bay stood with his head down, his sides heaving, and Leon knew that the team could not long endure this killing pace. He sat there chafing at this forced delay, and the thought came to him of Homer on Pelham mountain where even on such days as this there was always a stir of breeze. Others would be there from Granby Center and the outlying farms around, easy-going fellows who let the morrow take care of itself. And the old rage at these and others like them and the injustice of his own lot burned in him afresh, making his eyes flame and his hands tremble. He spoke sharply to his team, urging them on; and they obeyed in dumb submission. The afternoon wore on and the piece of standing grass dwindled into the carpet of lighter green swaths.

This weather continued for two weeks and the high barn back of his mother's house filled slowly. Homer had come the next day, but Leon hardly spoke to him, showing his resentment in the hard pace he set that drove them desperately at the work. Homer, after a trial or two at friendly talk, left his brother alone and kept up his own

end in the field without complaint. And it was a grim business in the heat and the dust, sweating, straining, carrying great mounds of grass from the swamp to higher ground, mowing it in the barn by hand in an inferno of dry dust-laden air more terrible to breathe than the burning wind outside.

They were nearing the end now. The mowing was over and the last loads cocked in the fields.

"We'll finish by sundown," Leon told his mother that noon. A crackle of exultation was in his voice.

"We will if it don't shower," said Homer. "Seems like the wind's shifted a mite since ten o'clock."

"It can't shower," said Leon uneasily. "Rain this afternoon will undo a full day's work and make another."

He got suddenly up from the table, his dinner half eaten, and going out into the yard held up a wet finger to the wind. Over toward Granby Center the sky looked hazy and he could barely make out the church spire above a dim mass of trees. He had seen it at other times emerge from such a haze, near looking, intensely white, piercing a black rim of cloud. There was no doubt that the wind had shifted, was dying ominously, and as he stood, the sky seemed darker.

Presently the others heard the rattle of a wagon in the yard and heard his voice impatiently bidding them hurry. And they to humor him left their meal and clung precariously to the rack while he lashed the team down the hill and along the grass road leading to the fields.

Three loads they took out and mowed away while the storm spread darkly over them with a mutter of distant thunder. The barn they worked in, like many in New England, stood higher than the house, built by design upon a rise above the yard to form a natural barn cellar. A steep little incline led to the great doors, enough of one to make a team strain to reach the floor with a loaded wagon. And Kellog, constantly irked by time lost on the long slow draw from the lower fields, piled up his loads, each one a little higher, until they towered high as the doors themselves, forcing the driver to crouch to avoid being brushed off.

As they came with their fourth towering load into the dooryard, Homer, walking ahead, measured the height with his eyes and called up to his brother: "You'll never make it, Lee. We've got her built too high."

But Leon had not heard him. The first cold spatter of rain had stung his cheek, and there flashed across his mind a picture of the neat rows of haycocks in the lower meadow, enough for a last load as large as this. He gave the horses their heads, and they, eager to perform the last task before a half hour's rest, broke into a straining run that made the huge pile of green above them career drunkenly.

Halfway up the rise the bay stepped on a loose stone and stumbled, and the buckskin, pulling ahead, swerved the load so that Leon half stood up to pull on the lines. And then, before he could flatten down, they gathered momentum and shot into the barn.

Homer running clumsily behind saw Leon strike against the top of the door and pitch back-

ward out of a tumbling clot of green. No sound came to him above the clatter on the barn floor, but something in the cant of the body when he came up to it made him bend over swiftly and then turn away his eyes.

They held the funeral at the white church in the Center, and those in Granby who still hayed it, or were far enough along to be again at cultivating, gave up the afternoon and filled the pews. After the ceremony and for days and weeks there was talk and some conjecture about the accident, but no one, not even Anna Kellog and his mother, thought of the true reason for it. And in the fall Homer sold the old place to Roy Fuller and found for his mother and sisters a house in town near his.

NOTE FOR A FLY-LEAF

HOYT HUDSON

So that a cool wind in June's dawn blowing
across a hill-top makes furrows, momentarily
tossing the glass-green lengths of grasses and
bright heads of daisies, so that twigs of spicewood
bitten bring moisture in the mouth and sharpness
on the tongue

what matter then our words?

Let words and craft of words be held in secret,
words beaten light and thin with ringing hammers
metal that floats like smoke, ingots made sheer
to gossamer that barely glints with any lustre.

If only the slant axe cleave the yellow fibres
of hemlock, compressing the pith in the clean-cut
edges of chips, then if only my instant
becomes yours too, and if it could be his
who goes by on the street

I say what matters is
this glancing instant with its frost of light
these crystal blue and silver shells of air
that isolate the instant, redolence too
and texture that rests the eyes.

These are what matter.

And only then our words without noise or effort
as the mind works in secret, as clear water
seeps in a mountain laying beneath the rock
multiform seams of metal and all in secret.

SUBSTITUTE

MARY QUAYLE INNIS

The house flattened its nose against the road like a child at the pane. It looked in its dirt and dilapidation like a hovel from a city slum suddenly set down in a frowsy, littered farm yard under open country sky. The weather was cold and the children were kept in the house. Fern stood at the window and was the first person to see Miss Jenkins coming. She turned round, waving her arms, and Vi ran to look too. Then she squealed, "Here comes the old bat. You kids, don't you dare tell her I'm here. Keep your traps shut, all of you."

She ran into the bedroom and shut the door just as Miss Jenkins rapped at the door and opened it.

"You poor little souls," she began, looking around as though she were hunting somebody. "You poor dear little souls. How are you gettin' along then?"

Fern scowled at Elmer who was the only one likely to talk. Inez was too little to make herself understood and Ollie was queer. He just sat on the floor and stared with his lower lip hanging. Fern dropped down beside him and wiped his chin with his black sateen romper and then gave Elmer an apple to keep him quiet.

"Poor little souls, all alone with your dear mother in the hospital," Miss Jenkins went on, looking hard at the closed bedroom door. "Your pa ain't sick, is he?" she asked Fern sharply.

"No, ma'am, he's out at the barn."

"An' do you do all the work, Fern? You ain't big enough. A whole month your ma's been gone, ain't it? How's she gettin' along, do you hear?"

Inez had finished staring at the caller and was running toward the bedroom door shouting.

"By! By!" It was lucky she couldn't say Vi's name any plainer than that.

Fern hurried to pick her up and stood with the heavy child straddling her hip, her body pressed to one side.

"Ma's better," she muttered. "She's comin' home."

"By! By!" cried Inez, struggling against her sister's side.

"What's she sayin'?" demanded Miss Jenkins. Fern flushed and bent her head toward the baby's

curls. Miss Jenkins' voice sharpened.

"I heard that hussy Vi'let Miller was here. She ain't been here, has she? I do hope your pa's got the decency not to bring a bad woman in the same house with his innocent child'ern an' your poor ma in the hospital an' all. Vi'let Miller ain't been here, has she?"

Fern shook her head.

"Well, I'm sure I don't see how you've got along a whole month alone. It's funny your pa wouldn't get nobody to look after you."

Fern said nothing and pretty soon Miss Jenkins went away, looking back from the threshold at the bedroom door. As soon as she was out on the road, Fern set Inez down and she floundered across to the bedroom and threw herself into Vi's arms.

"Well, the old tabby," Vi cried, laughing and throwing Inez above her head.

When Vi was in the room Fern felt light and happy again. She never had anything to worry about when Vi was around. It was only a month Vi had lived with them but it seemed like forever. Fern could scarcely remember her mother's face but she remembered her mother's hand, hard and flat as a shingle, striking with tingling force on any head or arm or back that came in its way. Vi could be rough when she was mad, rougher than ma was, but the next minute she grabbed you up and kissed you, and ma went on scolding, scolding with a harsh noise like a saw. The children didn't listen but it made them cross and uneasy to hear the noise going on. Of course it was because of ma's pains. The pain in her back and the pain in her head and all the other pains that Fern had heard her tell about. Ma had explained, sometimes, that it was being sick all the time that made her so cross. That didn't seem to make it hurt less when she slapped you.

"Look here now, Fern, don't you forget how I showed you to curl the kid's hair," Vi said, sitting down with Inez on her knee. "You comb it around your finger an' keep on wettin' it. Look at it now."

Miss Jenkins had stared at Inez' head and no wonder. It looked like a picture in the paper. Everybody had thought the baby's hair was just

snarly, but Vi had spent all her spare time combing it till it looked all gold and curly as shavings.

"I don't know if I can do it," Fern said doubtfully, standing near Vi's chair. If she stood very close Vi often put an arm around her.

"Sure you can," Vi said, giving her a hug.

Elmer brought some wood from the shed and put it in front of the stove with one eye on Vi to see if she noticed. Elmer would do anything for Vi. Even Ollie came hitching along the floor to reach Vi's feet. She put the baby down to take him on her lap. Ollie was over three and couldn't talk or walk yet; Inez wasn't two and she beat him at everything. He hadn't even smiled before he saw Vi. Now he gave her his big slobbery grin and she wiped his mouth. They were all clustered round her. Even Ollie seemed to know she was going away.

When Pa came in, Vi was making candy.

"I'm goin' to leave 'em a sweet taste," she said.

"You'll leave us all a sweet taste without no candy," Pa said. He looked dark and mad but not mad at Vi.

"Time to go?" Vi asked.

"Guess so." Pa went over to Vi and put his arms around her. "Gosh, Vi, I wouldn't get her if I didn't have to. But they wrote she's all right. The hospital won't keep her no more. I don't know what else to do."

Vi laughed.

"Course you have to. I know that. I never expected to stay but just till she come back. I'll get ready."

From the bedroom she called out, "Miss Jenkins was here. Come to see how the kids was makin' out."

"The old bat. She wanted me to hire her."

"You kids keep still," he went on loudly. "If you tell your ma Vi was here, I'll lick the tar out of you. Hear, Fern? Hear, Elmer? I'll skin you alive, that's what I'll do."

"She won't be long findin' out," Vi said. "Miss Jenkins'll be round tomorrow. There'll be plenty'll tell her. A pack more would of been here if it wasn't so far from town."

"All right, let 'em tell her. But you kids keep it shut."

Fern knew there was no danger of her telling. She felt that she would never be able to talk again. Her throat ached terribly—a great pain closed it tight. She tried to hide her head but Vi saw her and asked, "What's the matter with Fern?"

"My eyes is waterin'," Fern muttered, ashamed.

"Fern's been peelin' onions," Vi said and her laugh broke suddenly.

Elmer's fists were in his eyes and Ollie sat staring, blank and dripping. "Everybody's been peelin' onions," Vi said. "Me too." She blew her nose and went and looked out of the window. She had on her little red hat and her lovely red coat and her clothes were packed in the bag that Pa had carried out to the car.

"By! By!" Inez cried, stumping after her. Vi caught her up and squeezed her, she kissed everybody in a whirl of perfume and warm lips and wet cheek.

"Don't forget the curls," she called back in a voice not like her own. "An' play with Ollie once in a while. He might notice more if you keep after him."

She was gone; the car rattled away down the road. Inez howled and for once Fern did not run to comfort her. The pain in her throat was unbearable, her face wrinkled up, and her eyes ran streams. Whether she wanted to or not she was crying and for a minute she couldn't stop. When they saw her cry, they all cried. Elmer bawled louder than before, Inez screamed till her face was like a flame, even Ollie set up a horrible vacant roar. She was a nice one to look after kids. What would Vi say to see her acting like this? Fern couldn't straighten her face yet, but she took Inez up on her hip and she broke off a piece of Vi's candy to put in Elmer's mouth.

When the rest quieted, Ollie was quiet. Fern gave out candy freely. They needed something to cheer them up and ma would only suspicion something if she saw it. It would be hard enough to explain Inez' curls and the way the room was fixed up. Vi hadn't cleaned it much but she had made it look different and pretty. Perhaps now she was gone, though, it wasn't so cheerful. Fern swallowed hard and managed to wipe her face on the baby's shoulder. She carried Inez to the bedroom. It was quite tidy for ma's coming but there was a flowery smell in it, the perfume that followed Vi, and ma would notice that. Fern felt heavy with more than the baby's heaviness. Ma home again. She tried to make a picture of what it had been like with ma at home but she could only remember a frightened, uneasy darkness. Maybe now that ma had been to the hospital she wouldn't have her pains any more. Fern coughed and went to the pail for a drink. She was not going to cry again.

She gave Inez her supper and put her to bed. While she was feeding Ollie, pushing his head back so that the potato wouldn't fall out of his mouth, she heard the car in the yard. For a second she was scared; she only wanted to run and hide. Then Pa opened the door and came in holding Ma by the arm. Fern drew back, staring at her.

Ma looked thinner than ever, her yellow face was as straight and narrow as a board. She took off her old black hat and looked at the children.

"Can't you say nothin'?" she cried. "Why

don't you say somethin' when your ma comes back? Looks like you don't care if you never seen me again. That's all the thanks I get. That's all they think of their ma an' her been in hospital an' all she's went through." She limped slowly to the bedroom, still scolding. The harsh, grating voice was just the same — it brought back everything. Ma had never been away. Fern set her teeth hard and kicked Elmer to warn him to keep quiet.

In the bedroom the complaining voice woke Inez who sat up in her crib with her eyes shut, crying, "By! By! By!"

MR. PIPER'S MOMENT

VIRGINIA MOORE

Mr. Piper was a clever man but he had never been known to sing. In the bathroom, after winning a case in court, or on a fishing trip, when he thought no one was around, a sound incongruous and rusty issued from his person, but even his daughter Hester did not call this singing. "I can't sing," Hester would say with a humility like pride. "I'm like Father." The four other children sang very well, thanks to Mrs. Piper. Hers was a slumberous voice, made for Mississippi nights mysterious with what you did not see, warm, sweet, staggering a little under a weight of stars. Forty years had coarsened somewhat the lush of her beauty, but had left her voice finetimbered and clear. It was a regular institution in Greenway. When friends dropped in after supper for a little singing on the lawn, Mr. Piper sat immobile on the porch, in a rocking-chair, not rocking. The features of his face were indistinct like an old photograph but his hair stood out like snow.

"William, the Percys are coming over tonight. And the Gaults. And Miss Follway."

"I have no objection, my dear." He smacked a mosquito.

"William, why don't you ever join us on the lawn? People must think it very funny — sitting on the porch —"

"They come to see you," he said in a voice which in another man would have seemed harsh.

"You know Mr. Gault likes to talk politics."

"I'm on the porch if he wants me."

"Why don't you sing — just once?"

"Earnestine," he said, with kindly but deep reproach.

"William, in the group. I wish you'd sing in the group." She stood, handsome and adequate, on the walk by the roses, and he knew that if she chose to continue he could not stop her. "I've never heard you sing — can you?"

She ran her fingers through the clean white heap of hair, thinking of something else. He was transfixed with joy. But he did not put out his hand and touch hers. Never had he done things like that.

"Get along," he said, without malice, as to a child.

Mrs. Piper strolled out to receive her guests without him.

"Do I look well?" she called back, standing tall and fine and stout, by the cape-jasmine, knowing that she did.

"Yes," said Mr. Piper, who always gave true and just answers, conscientiously, as in legal decisions.

"What are you thinking about, Father?" called Hester, a little later. "Page eighty-eight of the statute?"

"No."

"Gibbon, Scott, Dickens?"

"One of them."

"I knew it!"

Gratefully Mr. Piper's heart went toward his daughter Hester. As she came closer Hester scanned with pride his face that centuries had been necessary to mould, finished and uncommon, as if it required nothing of anyone. She sensed rather than thought that it was the premise to her life. She had a feeling of wanting to help him.

"You know so much!" said Mr. Piper, with his

nearest approach to banter.

She knew so much! He looked after her, his daughter. Hester the close-mouthed one, in a dress thin and white, running for lemonade. She knew nothing, Hester. Suddenly Mr. Piper felt old and wise and sad. It was as if, with a drag from his cigar, he dragged back into him his life: the silent childhood, the suppressed hard love, the loss of money, the ruin of health in a train wreck, the small town law practice when he was equal intellectually to — to what might he not have been equal? Haggling, plodding, straining for a little money to pay bills with — that was all he had to look forward to. The children must have good educations, to civilize the heart and sharpen the mind. Earnestine must be cared for and denied nothing. When Mr. Piper remembered his children and his wife he did not think of himself as being defeated, and if he had thought of himself so, he would not have called it sacrifice.

"They've come, William!" Earnestine at forty with sweet powers of plaguing!

He went down obediently and spoke to each in turn, with dignity. Earnestine was proud of his bearing. But when the talk grew light and the laughter frothy and they hooked chairs into a circle, with mottles of moonlight on their faces and arms, he went away without being noticed. Hester coming through the porch with a plate of cake said, "Aren't you going to sing, Father?" and was sorry the next minute. She knew he never sang.

"I'll listen," said Mr. Piper, without rancour.

Mrs. Piper struck a rich slow chord on the guitar, and her voice melted and flowed into the sound. It made Mr. Piper think of the year she would have been willing to get a divorce. The reason had been more terrible because intangible. But that period, thank the good God, had been bridged over, lived through. He searched for Earnestine in the gloom. Heavy? Earnestine wasn't heavy. The voice floated, comely and impalpable as Earnestine, years ago.

*"Way down upon the Swanee River,
Far, far away,
There's where my heart is turning ever,
There's where the old folks stay.
All the world is sad and dreary . . ."*

Mr. Piper, who had not wanted to hear, turned his head. That was Earnestine's voice through and above and below the others. He drew hard on his cigar like a man in trouble.

Sad and dreary. Mr. Piper seemed to see all

that was solid in his life dissolving into a dew, into an atmosphere reminiscent and lonely. Fifty years old, and what had he accomplished of all that he had planned? Except Earnestine. Mr. Piper went out and sat on the steps, to be closer. He heard Earnestine say, "Let's do it again."

*"Way down upon the Swanee River,
Far, far away,
There's where my heart is turning ever . . ."*

At first quietly, hardly knowing what he was doing, Mr. Piper began to sing. Under cover of other voices it was a great relief, though he did it a shade grudgingly. He did not know whether it was bass or tenor; he simply opened his mouth and let the sound come out and since he did not hear it, supposed it resembled what he heard.

"There's where the old folks stay."

It was like brandy after a day in court. It was better than brandy. The disappointments of his life, the regrets, stopped being restless in his breast, they lay down; as the singing deepened and richened he was content not to be wealthy, or acclaimed, or travelled, or loved very much, even. Earnestine had wanted to get rid of him. She had treated him badly for a while. It was all right. He would not, if he could, change any part of his life . . . and he looked down the lawn into the strange darkness of the trees. . . . He pressed his knees with his hands, hard, as if he would not let go.

*"All the world is sad and dreary
Everywhere I roam —*

Oh darkies, how my heart grows weary . . ."

The company of voices rose, oh passionately on the waiting air, and with them, only a little less audible, the sound from Mr. Piper.

Grows weary. With a sudden noise like a gunshot a string broke. Those sitting close to Earnestine heard it and stopped. They peered through the dusky light, trying to determine the extent of the damage.

What was that? Could it be Mr. Piper? Under what he thought was the disguise of many voices he was singing in a kind of misshapen and belated triumph.

"Far from the old folks at home —"

Cutting the last word short he swallowed, looked around like a squirrel on guard, felt weak, the virtue drained out of him. With his eyes, of the dark, he might have been pleading for mercy, but nobody saw his eyes.

A cone fell into deep grass and every one of them heard it.

"William!" cried Earnestine, and laughed. "William! Good heavens!" and she caught her breath, and was convulsed again. There was nothing mean in the sound; it was more delight; but she laughed and laughed and laughed.

"I — well —" Mr. Piper cleared his throat.

"William! A solo!"

"Mother," Hester begged, feeling that she could take that mouth and hold it.

"What?" Earnestine laughed.

Now the voices were singing Old Black Joe and the volume ran and rose as smoothly as if nothing had happened.

"Come on, William," said Earnestine, "this is your début —"

Mr. Piper drew back into the shadow; without

unbending espoused the shadow.

"Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay

Gone are the friends . . ."

He was grateful for the renewed interest in singing. But Earnestine stopped the voices with a wave of her hand.

"Come on, William!"

At last he said something about the mosquitos and about wanting to smoke.

Only Hester knew that it was too calm, too successful, and when the song mounted, she had the feelings which go with tears.

"Oh, come on!" cried Earnestine.

But he did not.

He never did again.

CLANG

LUISE KELLEY

The bell bird seemed to be dozing, but he always affected a sleepy pose, his stiff twig legs spread wide to support his stumpy little body, and his absurd little head lying exactly in the center, for all the world like a wizened old man in a feather bed. Carol watched him intently for some small evidence of that inexplicable force which had won for the tiny creature such universal and mystified admiration. Not once had her visits to the Zoo been rewarded by a demonstration of his peculiar powers, but like all holders of reputations, the bell bird withheld the performance of a feat which rested firmly upon antecedent laurels. What he had done once he could do again, but after all, why should he? One supercilious eyelid unrolled downward, became aware of the girl leaning yearningly on the iron rail, then rolled up again, and became unaware.

Carol knew when she had been snubbed, and walked away to the other side of the Bird House. She paced restlessly past the pink flamingoes, one-legged birds with long necks whose pliability apparently knew no limitations and caused their dark heads to appear at surprising angles from their bodies. Their eyes were open but showed no recognition of such a clumsy mechanism as a human being. She stopped before the huge macaw to admire begrudgingly his brilliant plum-

age. No girl would dare to wear such a flagrant mixture of the primary colors; nor would girl or man brazenly pick the sawdust from between his toes in public, as the macaw was engaged in doing. It was disgusting, and at the same time more defensible than limping along for blocks with a pebble in one's shoe.

There had been occasions when Carol found the atmosphere of the Zoo hostile. Today she found it appallingly indifferent. By the time she had worked around to the bell bird again, she was conscious of a new loneliness that grew upon her as she stared at this particular object of her frustration.

He was by no means a pretty bird. His feathers were a dirty white and always askew, and the lines of his body were ridiculous. The one distinguishing feature he possessed he arbitrarily concealed. It was only when he raised his head, that weak little head that rested on its dirty pillow in habitual lassitude, that a glimpse was revealed of a slender throat of dazzling blue. The only other blue that Carol could compare it to was the furthestmost depths of an early morning sky, seen lying on one's back, after sleeping all night under the stars. That blue, too, was a rare experience.

Carol continued leaning on the rail in dejected

rebellion. She had long ago exhausted various ruses in the hope of calling forth from the bird that weird, resonant sound which others more fortunate than she had described to her as the most uncanny volume of self-expression they had ever heard. They had testified to their amazement at the metallic quality of this cry issuing from a handful of rumpled feathers. It could be heard over the entire building, and had often led to the amusing inquiries of visitors who mistook it for the closing gong of the Zoological Park, or for a general sounding of alarm. One imaginative soul had hazarded the guess that the Bengal tiger was at large, whereas it was only the little bell bird reasserting his claim to greatness.

Reluctantly the girl turned away and walked out the door into the sunshine. A few feet from the entrance a peacock was pecking at a bit of hard bread. He neither spread his tail at her approach, nor made any other attempt to divert attention from his ungainly feet. Was there a general conspiracy abroad to ignore her presence?

She decided to visit the prairie dogs, heartened at the prospect of surprising them at their never-ceasing antics. She came across their low mound dwellings a little farther on.

The prairie dog colony was in full sway. A tiny head with jet-black eyes would appear suddenly at one of the openings in the ground, then disappear as suddenly. The same pantomime would then be repeated at another portal. There was such a constant flickering of little heads that it was impossible to estimate the extent of the colony, particularly as the underground passageways made it quite possible for the same animal to run from opening to opening. Carol tried to keep up with the performance. She was startled by the exact resemblance of them all. Then she was struck by the uncomfortable idea that there was only one prairie dog in the whole enclosure, and that this one creature was rushing from hole to hole underground for the express purpose of staring at her. It was like standing in front of a house after you have rung the bell and experiencing the sensation of someone inside running from window to window to peer at you. Then that impression passed, and the spectacle seemed but a senseless rushing to and fro, that might possess some significance for the actors but which could extend no possible meaning to its audience.

Carol moved on, and headed for the bear pit. She felt the need of size and dignity after the

prairie dogs. The bear pit was a deep round hole in the rocky ground, flanked by a hand-rail that prevented the bears from climbing out and the visitors from falling in. There were three brown bears in it now — big, shaggy brutes with long, sinister claws that click-clacked on the stone floor as they came ambling up to reconnoitre Carol. They arranged themselves in a row below her, reared up clumsily on their hind legs, and waved their paws in a suggestive fashion. The one on the right even opened his mouth to further convey his meaning. But Carol had neglected to provide herself with peanuts or other bear food, and as soon as the three bears were convinced of this dearth they shifted back to their normal posture and moved away. Abruptly she ceased to exist for them.

Carol tried to dismiss the bear trio with a disparaging comment on the grossness of bears in general, but she was unable to shake off the suspicion that the bears — like the other animals — were beyond reproach from their standards. She alone seemed to be always wrong. Or rather, not so much wrong as non-existent . . . negative. The only thing that continued to assert itself positively was her loneliness, which was becoming more positive every minute.

On her way back from the bear pit she passed the giant sea lion. He was reclining on the rocks above his swimming pool when Carol came up. Seen from this angle the monster appeared an inert, shapeless mass of wet blubber. It seemed incredible that such a nondescript object could ever assert itself. Taking his whiskers as a starting point, Carol tried to find the creature's eyes, and being unable to locate them or to distinguish any other line of demarcation between mass and form, turned away with an appreciable lifting of her spirits.

For the first time since the flamingoes had silently scorned her physical composition Carol consciously rejoiced in her slender, agile body. She climbed the grassy slope in short, swift strides that restored still more of her sense of rightness. At the top she paused for a moment to enjoy the temporary relief.

Some little distance below her the sea lion lay stretched out as she had left him . . . Or had there been a change in his position? While she watched in unwilling fascination, the huge bulk slowly reared itself upon its two flippers and a well-defined head emerged from the ponderous base. The sea lion had been lying on the edge of

the pool. Now by some unfathomable power of motivation the whole unwieldy mass slid easily down the incline, and disappeared instantly beneath the scarcely ruffled surface. Almost immediately the head reappeared at the far end of the pool, tilted itself skyward, emitted a raucous below, then was gone again. Carol watched its lithe, swift movements with envious eyes. Her own two legs seemed awkward now and grotesque — extremities lacking the grace and virility of a tail.

She walked on slowly, overtaken by a sudden weariness of body that added itself to her former distress of spirit with an overwhelming insistence. She looked around her for an exit with all the desperation of a person lost in a maze.

Off to the left she caught a glimpse of something white moving irregularly. Without aim or purpose she followed this lead and came upon the penguin brood.

The one who had caught her eye was waddling around uncertainly by himself. Occasionally he would stop, lift his head high in the air as though seeking some astronomical guidance, then continue his peregrinations. He might have been the victim of a practical joke out hunting for his persecutor, except that there was no animosity visible in his manoeuvres — just bewilderment and perplexity. His flippers hung down forlornly at either side of his pudgy little body which looked like a round bolster set on end. At any other time Carol would have been convulsed with amusement, but today each futile gesture that the bird made aroused in her such a flood of sympathy that she believed herself identified with his troubles more intimately than she had ever been identified with anyone or anything before . . . She watched him breathlessly while he made short awkward rushes in no particular direction. Each time that he paused for a moment to renew his silent appeal to the sky, she joined him in one equally silent and fervent.

The rest of the penguins were grouped in one corner, apparently engrossed in each other, and paying no attention to their wandering brother. In an especially aimless sally Carol's penguin drew near their circle. That time when he paused for reinforcements the penguin thrust his head less high into the ether above. The next time he cocked it decidedly on one side. The following spasm (his ridiculous movements could scarcely

be dignified by any other name) carried him right into their midst . . . and a moment after, Carol could not have told which penguin was her penguin. Nor did he emerge again, though Carol waited for a long time. . . .

She avoided the remaining zoological exhibits, and kept on blindly until she reached the Bird House once more. Here she paused irresolutely, then went inside.

At the first glance there seemed to be no one in the building. Then as she made her way towards the familiar corner where the bell bird had his cage, she saw a small group of people clustered in front of it. She took her place in the group silently. They accepted her into their midst with the same air of hushed absorption. With fixed eyes they watched the bell bird together.

At first Carol saw no change in the bird's habitual composure. Then she became aware of a slight ruffling of the untidy feathers, followed by a swelling of the tiny chest. The little twig legs now stretched themselves to the utmost, the slender soft neck rose upward revealing the dazzling blue throat, the wizened head jerked backward, the beak opened to astounding width, a shudder ran through the bird's outstretched body, and there issued forth from the creature's extended depths a startling, reverberating "CLANG!" Carol felt that her whole head was a brass gong, which someone had just struck a terrific blow. Her ears rang, her mouth was dry, her eyes reported four birds in the cage instead of one. . . .

She clutched the rail to brace herself for the next blow. But even as her head cleared and the bird became focussed again before her, she saw him droop together, collapse, then resume his previous lethargy. Already the other people were turning away. Already the iron rail was turning to ice in Carol's tense grip. She felt it numbing her through and through. And as she stared and stared in solitary unbelief, she could see him becoming again a silly little bird with shoe-button eyes without expression or soul. . . .

She tore her hands from the rail, where they seemed to be forever rusted, and fled towards the door.

At the Zoo entrance she ran into a crowd of people waiting for the street car. When they boarded the street car she got on with them. She hadn't the slightest idea where the car was going . . . but she was with her kind.

THE PRINCE

GEORGE ALBEE

I met the prince through Marie. He was all she talked about. She told me she had been chambermaid at the filthy little hotel in Golfe-Juan for a year without being able to save enough money to get the third-class railway tickets that would take the prince and her to Paris. When she brought up my coffee-and-crescents in the mornings she chattered endlessly about the jobs she and the prince hoped to find in Paris; there was a lot of graft about job-getting there, it seemed, but they were going to have a try at it, if only they could save enough money for the tickets. A stocky Breton girl with blue eyes and a complexion that would have made me fall in love with her myself if she hadn't smelt so, she sat on my bed and rubbed her sturdy legs, swollen from climbing stairs all day long, and told me about the prince.

"He works so hard in that wagon-factory, for thirty francs a day! That's three times what I get, but he has to pay for his meals and his room so he can't save anything either. He suffers more than I do, my poor darling; I've worked hard all my life, but, see you, in Russia he was a prince, and he isn't used to it."

"America is full of Russian princes," I told her. "There are so many of them that we give them uniforms, *comme les gendarmes, vous savez*? You'd better make sure."

"Oh, but he speaks nine languages! Oh, monsieur, if only you would —"

"Dis."

"There's no way I can repay you. I'll let you make love to me, if you want to. But — oh, if you would talk English to him just once, monsieur! He has only me to talk to, and he has not spoken anything but French for so long! It would make him very happy to talk to a well-elevated American."

I waited in the hotel garden Sunday morning, sniffing the Riviera — one third tar, one third rotting kelp, and one third jasmine. From the stone bench beneath the oleander I saw them come along the sidewalk from church, holding hands. Marie wore her faded and fuzzy tan cotton stockings, possibly but not probably washed, and her Sunday dress, a white one made of rayon and

large enough for a large horse. The prince was wearing rope-soled sandals, pongee trousers that ended above his socks, an exceedingly old straw hat, no coat, and a bright pink shirt large enough for the horse's brother; its sleeves were held up by elastic arm-bands, which had ruffles and purple rosettes. He was a thin, frail little chap with big black eyes. Beside Marie he looked like a little boy out for a walk with his nurse.

Marie waved timidly. She had seen me often enough in my room without a stitch on, but this was the first time we had met socially; I was a gentleman and she wasn't quite sure what I was going to do about it, which would seem to indicate that I am not a very good gentleman. She smiled. "Here is my friend, monsieur."

The prince shook hands with me, bowing, and said: "I am enchanted;" three words, and a formula at that, and there was no longer any doubt that he was a prince.

"Oh, one can speak English now, darling. Monsieur is American."

"If Americans speak English —," I said.

"We have been to church," said the prince, in English. "You do not attend the church here, sir? Marie enjoys it, and I find it quite cool and pleasant."

Marie smiled as she heard her name, and he reached out and took her rough hand and squeezed it.

"You were in the Revolution, monsieur?" I asked.

"Yes."

"I'm so sorry. That was bad."

"Yes, the Revolution was very bad for many persons beside myself."

"Marie has told me of your work. It's a rotten shame. But there must be something for you here on the Côte d'Azur. The banks at Cannes and Nice must need men with languages. Have you tried them?"

"Many times indeed, when I first came here. I have not tried for some months."

"But there's always a chance!"

"Ah, I do not like to speak English this way. She will never know for sure what we are saying. Perhaps she will think we are laughing at her."

Marie, I was sure, did not think that. As she smiled and bobbed her head she was crying, but that was happiness. "I can't speak French very well," I said.

"But you speak it superbly." The prince pressed Marie's hand again. "I do not know what is the matter with me, monsieur. I have no am-ambition."

"Is there anything I can do?" I asked.

"I do not believe so. I do not believe there is anything that anybody can do. I think perhaps I have — how do you say? — I think perhaps I have gone all to pieces."

He tipped his old hat, took Marie's arm, and they walked away from me. The audience with the prince had been granted.

WE DO NOT LEARN

HAROLD KERR

Maybe we have learned nothing at all
From the hawk cometed against the sky,
And the patch of bloody fur in the beaten grass.
Maybe less than nothing at all from the sleek cat
And the ripped open nest in the low tree.
But, surely, we have learned a deal from winter?

We sense that laughter is but the dull coin of dreams.
We are not sure that the vintage of the sleepless heart
Will not run sour in the blue channels where it races now.
And remembering the babbling of toothless old men,
Sounding like muffled fox calls out of a snowstorm,
We do not fan the embers in a wanton's eyes.

We have long since ceased to wonder at the hawk's talon,
And at the yellow scythe hidden in the cat's paw.
We doubt if these things will ever change —
That always there will be a claw flashing somewhere —
But we let winter rush by in a blue torrent of frost
Without comprehending.

ELDER BROTHER

K. ELEANOR SALTZMAN

Andrew Courtwright lay in his bed in the cool east room, his face grown old and wrinkled in the seven days of his illness. Earlier in the afternoon, over the strong protests of the nurse, he had demanded that they bring him his small metal box from his study and had worked among the papers within it. He had no illusions about his condition, and there are some things a man must do before — But presently he had been forced to rest, and now he lay quite still under the sheet, his eyes closed. He had not realized how weak he was. He knew that he had been right in refusing to go to the hospital. He belonged here, in his own house, the house he had built for Ila.

He thought about that for a little. Ila had waited a long time for the house, then when she had at last found herself within it, she had caught her heel on the smooth stair and had fallen to her death in its halls. The pain was creeping up along his side to his armpit again, and Andrew turned his head upon the pillow and opened his eyes.

The nurse bent over him with a glass of water, but he shook his head a little and let his eyes go on beyond her. He knew of course that he was much worse. The doctor had been in again this afternoon, and now Arthur had come to see him. He wondered why. Arthur's business needed him

every minute these days. That is, so they had told Andrew. Arthur didn't come around himself very often any more. Andrew smiled grimly within himself and watched his brother through half-closed lids. People were right when they said that they two looked like each other. Both were tall and dark-haired, with lean, active faces. Andrew wondered if people saw the differences, too. The full sensitive lips of the man in the chair, the telltale black eyes that spoke before his tongue. Andrew closed his own dark eyes and reflected with satisfaction that neither they nor his lips revealed anything except when he had willed it.

The pain knotted in his chest and drew the fine lines of his face into furrows. He knew even in his agony that his brother started to his feet, then relaxed once more into his chair as the paroxysm passed. With a strange detachment he considered again the curious fact of his brother's presence. Arthur was not such a fool as to think he would profit by his thoughtfulness. The older man turned his face away and again opened his eyes to stare at the summer clouds through the casement. He had helped the boy all he could when their parents had died. Arthur had had his education and would have received more than that. Even then Andrew had been markedly successful and could have done much for the brother who was almost ten years his junior. That he had cut him off was Arthur's fault, and Arthur's alone. He had got himself into trouble by his headlong impetuosity and would have paid dearly for it had there not been an older brother to come to his rescue. Arthur had been lucky in that the other man had lived, or even Andrew's influence would have been hard put to have saved him. And even then Arthur had married the girl.

Andrew let the next pain pass without even clenching his fingers. Now that it was growing dusk, he was tired, tired as he had been when a youngster on the farm after a day in the hayfield. If he stubbed his toe once more, it wouldn't hurt much. Feebly Andrew burrowed his head farther into the pillow like a sleepy boy. He was not deceived. Sooner or later, this would ring the curtain for him. Forty-two. That was young, he had thought. Well, he did not mind. His thoughts wandered to the will that he himself had drawn up months ago and to the many bequests through which he had forced his mind to flounder only a few short hours ago, until he had been forced to lay it aside. His illness had caught him

unawares. He would add another codicil tomorrow about the gift to the Worthington Home —

But it really didn't matter. The rube from the sticks had made his mark in the world. His business, this house, all the many pies in which he had had a finger attested to his achievements. Yes, he was satisfied, even to this last painful experience. He wished he could have lived long enough to see how the consolidation movement would work. It should have trebled their profits. But not even for an added lease on life would he have changed with Arthur, who, at thirty-three, had only a job, a wife, three kids, and a past. Andrew, turning his eyes toward the table, smiled again within his soul. It amused him to think of those folded sheets in the box so effectually cutting the bond between himself and his brother. Yet he knew the boy too well to think that by this visit he had hoped for last-minute reconciliations. Long ago Andrew had told him bluntly that he had cut him off, and Arthur, smiling his scorn, had only turned away in silence. Ila had had no child. Let it pass to charity. But Arthur could not have denied himself this last sentimental gesture. After all, he would have said had you permitted him, you are my brother Andrew.

The fountain of pain within him sprayed his chest as with points of fire, and he drew back his head stiffly to endure their burning. When this passed he would relax again to rest. Let Arthur sit on there if he wished. Andrew would be asleep. He would lose himself for a brief space in oblivion. He wished whimsically that he had the strength to tuck his arm above his head the way he used to do as a kid. He thought with a wistful tug in his throat of the cool nights when Ma had let him sleep in the stack-cover tent over the clothes line. This room was so close. He braced himself feebly against the onslaught of burning pain. Mercilessly it crept up his body to his armpits, then, almost like a friend, released him slowly back upon the pillow. With gratefully closed eyes he rested, drifting away into a sleep of utter exhaustion that presently glimmered and quivered with odd bits of his boyhood, irrelevant, poignant memories drawn from long boyish years, moving together now into a strange synthesis of new, life-breathing experience.

He stirred, then lay still again under the sore pressure that weighted down his arms. Again he tentatively moved his fingers and felt the twinges through his shoulders. He opened his eyes and stared above him into the darkness. For the mo-

ment he wondered bewilderedly where he could be.

Then a horse whinnied somewhere not far away. Carefully, stiffly, he sat up and wriggled his "sleepy" legs and arms back to life. He wondered how he could have gone to sleep in this hot old hole of an oats bin. He ran his fingers through his hair and felt the oats slip from the tangles down his back. Then he heard steps outside and knew why Old Brownie had nickered, why he had awakened. That was Pa. He knew by the sound of his overall legs swishing together, by the way his feet shuffled through the hay in the drive. He heard ears of corn rattle into the feed boxes and heard the crunch and shuffle of the grain under the fumble of the horses' clumsy lips.

He scrambled to the door of the bin and let himself out, dropping lightly on his bare feet, the oats scattering on the driveway floor as he shook himself free. Noiselessly he followed his father out of the barn.

"Artie in there?"

He had forgotten Arthur. "Hunh-unh."

"Made the slop for your pigs?"

"Not yet, Pa." He watched his father throw the gunny sack over his arm and pick up an empty bucket. He had forgotten what day this was, but he thought it must be about the end of the week, because he noticed that Pa's face was covered with thick stubbly beard. Andrew watched him go across the lot toward the tank and thought how tall he was. He wondered how much taller he would be if he didn't stoop over like that. Ma said that was because he did too much heavy lifting. She said he would kill himself yet. But Pa always went on lifting. He didn't pay any attention when Ma said to be careful.

Andrew went toward the hog lot and wondered about the slop. He had forgotten what went into it, but he thought there must be some meal and bran inside the machine shed. He remembered that was where they generally kept stuff for slop. So he got a bucket at the hog trough and started away, then he went back and looked in the barrel. It was almost half full, so he didn't bother to make more but carried a few buckets of water and put it in what was already there. He felt dusty and sweaty from the oats bin, and so he washed under the pump after he had filled the barrel, letting the water run over his head until he had the neck of his shirt and the front of his overalls all wet. If Artie was around, he'd stick his head under. It was funny to hear him squeal and blow.

Then he slopped the pigs, calling "Whoo — oo — ee" the way he had learned from his father. He watched them come running and grunting up the hill and out of the shed, and after they had guzzled and squealed and splashed at the trough for a little while, he lifted another bucket or two over the fence, hitting some of the pigs over the head with the stick he used to mix the slop, so that he could find a place to pour it in. Then he wiped his hands on his overall legs and walked with his noiseless bare feet toward the pasture where his father was milking. He climbed up on the gate and threw one leg over, so that he was balanced on the top.

The milk purred into the bucket, the sound changing, deepening as each squirt hit the white foam. Pa was on the other side of the spotted cow, and when she switched her tail at the flies and shifted, Pa took his head out of her flank, said "So — o —, now," and hitched his milk stool closer. Andrew remembered when he used to think it would be fun to balance on the little T of a milk stool and make the milk hit the bucket with swift white arrows. But now he had learned, and it wasn't so much fun, after all. Especially when Pa was working at the neighbors and Ma was too busy to help him.

Andrew looked over Pa and Spot and from his perch gazed far out across the back woods to the evening. Pretty soon the sun would go down. He must have slept longer than he thought because this was late to be doing the chores. He had a guilty little feeling that he should have had the milking done, so that when his father spoke, he jumped off the gate and stood at attention.

"That you, Andy?"

"Unh-hunh."

"Take that sack and get some cobs for Ma. There's some clean ones in the east crib."

Andrew slowly took the gunny sack off the fence and trailed it behind him to the barn. The east crib was dusky, but near the door was a pile of cobs. Stiffly, like a little old man, he bent for the cobs, one at a time, and dropped them into the sack. There must be about half a sack full. Artie could help him do this. He got out of doing most things except gathering the eggs in the henhouse, because he wasn't very big. Andrew even had to gather the eggs in the barn, because the hens sometimes laid under the mangers and down in the west stable, and the folks were afraid to have Artie climb around and go in the stable for fear he would get hurt. Funny he hadn't been

tagging around. He generally followed a fellow everywhere. Andrew sat back on his haunches and called.

"A — a — art — ie!"

He waited. No scurry of bare feet on the drive. He called again.

"A — a — art — ie!"

No use. Probably hid. Andrew went on putting the cobs into the sack, one by one. It was getting darker in the east crib. He got down on his knees and hurried a little. He had forgotten to get the eggs in the barn, but Ma might not remember to ask him if he had done it. He'd get them early tomorrow.

He swung the sack to the ground and jumping down, shut the door and turned the little wooden latch to place. Then he dragged the sack bumping along behind him toward the house.

He hoisted it over the board across the bottom of the gate into the yard and dragged it to the back door. Ma was standing inside the screen talking to Pa, who was pouring the milk into the separator on the box under the tree. She had a lamp lit in the kitchen, and she looked little and fat even with the light behind her.

"No, Artie hasn't come in yet. I don't know whether he looked down by the garden fence for eggs or not. Lift that sack up, Andy, or you'll bring all the barnyard dust into the house."

Andrew put the sack by the wood box and went out on the side porch and diving into the old couch, hung his feet over the end. He could smell ham and eggs and coffee. It was cool on the porch.

He heard Pa come in and lift the teakettle off the stove and pour water into the washpan.

"Andy ought to have had the milking done. Where's that milk you saved?" Andrew heard the milk sizzle into the skillet. Ma was always after him to have the work done for Pa. She said Pa was tired. But so was he. There was always such a lot to remember to do.

"I think he went to sleep in the barn." Pa said part of it into the towel. Presently Andrew heard his heavy shoes come across the kitchen. "Where's Artie?" He stood in the door turning down his shirt sleeves. His hair was wet and combed down in little dark curves across his forehead. Andrew always liked to see Pa's forehead, all soft and white where the band of his hat went around, with the rest of his face burnt red from the sun. He lay now and looked at the black hair curving across the white. Then he stirred and took his

arm down for a minute from under his head. "I don't know where Artie is," he said irritably.

Pa came out and stood on the porch and looked over to the southeast toward the tassels of corn beginning to show between the apple trees. Andrew looked at his father's back, where the suspenders came down and crossed, each between two dark, sweaty streaks. His father smoothed his hair and rocked back a little on his heels, looking thoughtfully at his corn. Ma scraped the bottom of a pan in the kitchen.

Then Pa turned suddenly. "You got to get ready for supper." He laughed and jerked at Andrew's suspenders. "You got to wash for supper. Let me have the couch." He jerked again, and Andrew landed kicking on the porch floor. He was up in a minute and diving for the couch, but Pa had it already. Andrew rushed at him, but each time Pa would knock him away with one hand, laughing to see him come again, hot and panting. Ma came to the door.

"Be careful, you'll hurt him." Ma always took your part if you were getting the worst of it. "Let your father rest, Andy," she said, looking at him with her round worried face. "You wash up for supper."

He went inside the screen. "But I already washed."

"No, you haven't."

"Yes, I have, out at the pump."

"But you didn't wash since you got the cobs. You go clean up with soap and comb your hair." She wiped out a dish and set it on the edge of the stove. "Where do you think Artie is? Was he with you at the barn?"

"I haven't seen Artie." Andrew washed the front of his face and rubbed the towel over it, not bothering to think where Artie might be. If you went out and hollered that the eggs were gathered, he would come in. Andrew took down the old bone comb and dragged the part that had the most teeth through his hair, still wet from the pump. He stood on tiptoe and watched his long brown face in the mirror while he combed his hair.

His mother stirred the gravy, her chunky little body quivering at every swoop of her arm. Andrew stood with his fingers stuck into his hip pockets and watched her keep the gravy from bubbling, hurrying the spoon all over the bottom of the skillet. "Andy, you go find Artie." She put some cobs in the stove under the gravy.

"But, Ma, if Artie don't know enough to come to supper —"

"Andy," his father commanded loudly from the couch on the porch. "You go find Artie!"

For a minute Andrew stood still, stiffening. Something was making him remember — He had to find Artie! Right away. He was out of the house like a streak, the screen slamming behind him. A leap over the board across the bottom of the back gate, then he was running across the barnyard, cobs rolling under his swift feet. He didn't know where he was going. But Artie was some place where he couldn't come to supper. Something he only half remembered told him Artie couldn't come. Instinct swerved him around the barn and helped him over the gate into the back woods. He didn't remember that there was a path this way over the hill past the big rock, but his feet found it and carried him panting up the hill to the clearing. It was high there, and still light, as he paused, caught his breath, and looked behind him. The trees were shadows all around. He dragged a dirty sleeve across his sweaty forehead and ran off to one side into the thick of the trees. Snags under the long grass stuck his bare feet, and once he stumbled over a stump and fell into the hazel brush. But he struggled to get his feet to the ground again and ran on down the hill until he couldn't stop and thought he would roll over and over. He slid down into the gully, the sands of its dry bed still warm under his toes as he stumbled along. Then he scrambled over the last drift log and came to his Secret Place.

It was his own Secret Place, where the branch curved and dropped into the creek at the point where the water was deep, nobody knew how deep, Ma said. Andrew remembered that he had let Artie come with him here after dinner. He heard a terrified cry as he scrambled up the bank.

His face wet and dusty, his tongue dry, Andrew stood breathless for a minute with his heart pounding against his chest until it hurt, each thud sending little shivers into his throat. He looked all around and in a funny, dried-up voice said, "Artie. You there?"

"Andy, I c — can't get back!" A scared quiver came across the creek.

Andrew leaned against the tree, so relieved he felt suddenly cross. "Well, what are you doin' across there? Why don't you come back the way you went?"

The quiver found tears. "I w — walked across, like you, on the log, holdin' to the grapevine."

"Then why don't you come back like I did?" Andrew talked high and angry, because he was thinking of what would have happened if Artie had fallen off. He was such a little kid —

"I did start to — but I almost fell and got scared —"

Andrew put one hand up to rub his chest to get rid of those choking little quivers. "Well, you ought to have stayed over there. Why didn't you go down to the road?"

"I didn't know — which way — to go. Please, Andy, don't go away again. It's getting awful dark."

"Well, quit sniffin' and I won't." If he could only get his breath! "I'll get out on this log and hold to the vine, and you can take hold of my hand so you won't fall. Now come on, don't bawl, come on, now." Andrew walked out on the log and held out his hand.

He heard Artie come grunting down the bank to the log. Then he saw him stand, afraid to move, his eyes big and black, his baby lips quivering. His little old straw hat was wobbling in one hand.

"Put on your hat and come take my hand." Andrew coaxed a little, so he wouldn't be so afraid. "I won't let you fall off. You're not afraid. See, I do it, just as easy."

He felt Artie's hot little paw vise on to his, and he began to back slowly toward the other bank, his free hand clutching the vines. He didn't dare look over his shoulder to see how far they were from the bank. His throat kept quivering and choking him. His dark eyes strained through the dusk with soft pride toward his little brother. Through dry lips he coaxed.

"See how easy it is. Just keep on watchin' me. We'll soon be there. Won't Ma and Pa think you're brave, though? Why, you couldn't fall —"

He backed on to an old limb and helped Artie past him. In an eager little half run, Artie rushed toward the bank and almost slipped. Andrew caught his sleeve and with a little push shoved him over the end of the log to the bank. He felt the old rotten limb break away into the water with a plup, and his arms wrenched at the vine as his feet threshed around for something to stand on. His body sagged heavily from his arms until little pains slivered from his armpits into his neck and filled him full of living sparks. Through the shadows he saw Artie scramble up the bank. The vines above his head strained and cracked.

"Run along, Artie," he said thickly. "Tell the folks I can't come to supper."

The nurse, dozing in the chair where Arthur had waited hours before, started up at the harsh whisper. Her patient looked at her, yet did not seem to see. "That — paper on top? Burn it."

She would have soothed him, thinking him delirious, but his voice, thickening, cracked. "No! I want you to burn it. That — my will —"

Her hesitant fingers half opened the folded sheets. She thought she understood, remembering the old estrangement and the twisted, anxious

lips of the younger brother. She had heard Andrew's "Artie" in the fumble of words which had awakened her. But still she hesitated.

The rasp of his command came again, compelling her through the heavy saw of his breathing. She did not know why she obeyed. She heard him again. "Hurry. I can't hang on — here much longer —"

The match scraped briskly, and there was a flare in the empty metal lid of the box. Andrew twisted his lips as if to laugh, but there was only a strangle in his throat, as if he were drowning. His clutching fists fell open, relaxed.

NO VICTORY

GRACE E. KING

"I have Tim Burke this period," said one of two teachers standing in the hall as the classes passed. She sighed and pressed with nervous fingers her eyes around which the wrinkles were beginning to show.

"Does he bother you?" said the older woman. "Well, he doesn't me." She set her dry lips, stiffened her spread, middle aged figure. "He knows better than to start any nonsense in my class." She jerked her head, covered the younger woman with a glance of scornful pity, then crossed the hall to her own door.

The other teacher waited. She put her hand to her hair, pulled down one sleeve. Tim was coming down the hall. The insolence of his tones dominated the cacophony of pushing pupils. She could not distinguish words but she knew that the phrases he flung from the side of his mouth were sneering taunts for the girls who always surrounded him. His jeers excited them. They bumped against him and laughed shrilly.

He excited her. She was humiliated that this was so and would not admit it. As he came near, she went into her room and crossed to her desk so her back was toward him. She busied herself with some papers.

But she felt him come in. He described a broad arc, swaggering close to her. She knew he was looking down on her. She smelt him, his male body, the sheepskin lined leather jacket, stale cigarettes, cheap pomade on his strong black hair.

"Mornin', miss." Her spine became rigid under his stare.

"Ignore him," she whispered to herself. She set her teeth, but her hands were uncertain among the papers.

"Mornin', miss." The giggles of the girls underlined the insistence of his tone.

"Good morning." Her voice was false in her ears. She crossed to the bookcase, checking an impulse to hurry. He turned where he stood and watched her. The other members of the class straggled between them.

She resolved that she would not face him until the bell rang; then the impersonality of routine classroom procedure would be as a bulwark at her back. She slowly turned the pages of the book she opened. She felt Tim's eyes on her.

Suddenly he gasped as though stifling, plunged across the room and flung up all the windows. The girls, some in the aisles, some now in their seats, caught at the opportunity to claim his attention.

"Oh, it's cold! I'm freezing. Close 'em, Tim. Tim, Tim, we're freezing!" Their voices were clamorous.

Two girls near him hugged each other, pressed their bodies together, breast to breast and thigh to thigh, and swayed, their faces toward him. One or two called to the other boys. "Make him close 'em. It's awful cold! We're freezing."

But the boys, moved to weak imitation of Tim's success, sided with him. Their voices, as excited as the girls', added to the uproar. "Naw, leave 'em up. It's hot in here." Like Tim, they opened their jackets, wiped their brows, and gasped.

"Sure it's hot in here," said Tim. "Hottern hell." He flopped into his seat.

The tardy bell made it plausible to pretend that she had not heard the last word, though the eyes of the pupils shuttled questioningly from Tim to her and back to him. She faced the class and rapped on the desk for order.

Tim tore at the buttons of his shirt, unfastened two, breathed thickly, threw back his head and shoulders. The black hair on his chest protruded. The voices of the girls, hushed momentarily, broke out again.

"It's too cold in here. Please, can we close the windows?"

She spoke to a boy in the first row. "Jack, will you close the windows?"

Jack rose, and the class settled to hushed attention. He pulled down two panes. The third was near Tim's seat.

"It's hot. The air's bad. It's stuffy. Honest, miss, I'm all sweaty. Hi there, leave that one open."

Jack, his hand on the sash, grinned and looked from Tim to her.

"Close all the windows." She drew herself up, marshaling her authority. As the window rattled down, she turned to the class again. "Pass forward your papers."

Tim was out of his seat before she had finished speaking.

"I'll collect them for you, miss. Hi there, give me that paper." He threw his big body from side to side, lunging after the sheets. The boys held them away from him and grinned, and the girls, as he roughly pushed against them, tittered. One girl pushed back. He gripped her shoulder and shook her. Her face flamed, her eyes glowed.

"Pass the papers forward in each row. In each row," the teacher repeated and hit the desk sharply.

Tim relinquished the papers to the boy in front of him and dropped into his seat murmuring, "Gee, miss, I just wanted to help you." His bold eyes circled the class, collecting admiring glances.

She fastened the papers with a clip and laid them on her desk. "Take your books," she said and picked up her own. "Any questions on the assignment?" As the familiar words slipped out, she glanced at Tim fearing she had given him an opening, but he was buttoning his shirt. "Yes?" she said quickly to a girl who had raised her hand.

"I didn't understand the poem on page 159."

Pages rustled.

"I didn't either."

"Nor me."

She saw Tim move. "Class, open your books at page 159," she said hastily. More pages rustled.

Tim gazed before him, his desk bare. A girl in front of him whose desk was also bare turned around. A look passed between them. She raised her hand.

"Yes?"

"I forgot my book. Can I go and get it?"

"No."

"Can I move my chair and look on with Mabel?"

"No. Those who failed to bring books will receive zero for the recitation."

Tim leaned forward and reached behind him. From some recess in the leather jacket he brought forth a volume. The class watched as he opened it, and over the room passed a stir of satisfaction. The eyes of the pupils went from him to her and back to him.

"Did you say page 159, miss?"

"Page 159. We will read the poem. You may read, Mabel."

"The Forsaken Merman, Come dear children, let us away, Down and away below," Mabel droned. Tim, erect in his seat, his eyes on the page, was too attentive.

She wondered what he would do next. He wasn't so stupid as to expect her a second time to be caught by his complaints of the heat of the room. He wanted to remind her of that first time. She was humiliated anew as she remembered.

That day, as this, he had thrown up the windows and complained when she ordered them closed.

"Take off that heavy coat and you won't be so warm," she had said.

"I can't take it off, miss."

"Don't be absurd. Of course you can take it off."

"Honest I can't, miss."

Heat swept her. "Take it off at once!"

"I tell you I can't, miss."

The class was tense.

"Either take it off or report to the principal."

The clock ticked. She would not let her eyes fall before his bold stare. Then Tim shrugged, flung off the coat and stood grinning. His shirt was torn, and the flap of cloth fell down, exposing a nipple. "I told you I couldn't take it off, miss,"

he said and slipped back into it. The class stirred, looked from him to her and settled back, grinning, pleased, relaxed with spent excitement.

Mabel's stumbling monotone brought her back to the poem. "Once she sate with you and me on a red gold throne in the heart of the sea and the youngest sate on her knee."

"That will do, Mabel. You may read, Peter."

Tim's arm sawed the air.

"Read on, Peter."

"Please, miss."

"I asked you to read, Peter."

"Please, miss, can I ask a question? About the lesson."

Peter stood. Tim's arm beat the air. The pupils looked from him to her, their eyes alive in the flat masks of their faces.

"About the poem, honest, miss."

"Well?"

Tim clambered to his feet. "The notes say, miss, that a merman's got the upper part of a man and the tail of a fish?"

"Yes."

"And in the poem one was married to a woman?"

"The poem is symbolical," she began lamely.

"Yes'm," he interrupted, "but what I want to know is where did the fish part begin?"

The pupils' heads, as though pulled by invisible ropes, turned from Tim and bent over their books. Several of the girls grew red, and up the throats of the boys the color surged quickly. Over each adolescent face spread, like a thin slime, a look of half furtive, half exultant lewdness.

She felt herself flushing. The pressure of the hot blood was agony. It beat the harder for her passionate wish to control it.

"The poem is symbolical," she heard herself repeating, and her voice seemed a shout in the stiff silence of the room. "It is an allegory. Do you know what an allegory is?"

"No'm," said Tim, but his grin was impudent.

"Then find out," she snapped.

"Yes'm." He slumped into his seat, his big limbs loose.

One by one the pupils moved their heads as the tension lessened.

At the close of the period Tim lingered. He drew his big body slowly from his seat and lumbered to the front of the room. Before her desk he paused. She bent over the desk, checking papers.

He shuffled. "Miss," he said hesitatingly.

She looked up, surprised. His eyes fell before hers, his hands fumbled at the buttons of his jacket. She saw the awkward uncertainty of his body, the lax joints, the young curve of his cheek, the dark down on his soft lip. Her years freed her.

"Say, miss?"

"Yes, Timothy?"

"Why, you ain't sore or . . ."

"Ain't, Tim, ain't?"

"Well, I mean. . . . You see, miss, I didn't mean . . ."

"I wonder if you know what you do mean, Timothy?" Her smile was cold. "You'll be late for your next class." She bent again over the papers."

He lurched to the door. She raised her eyes to watch him. His shoulders were broad under the leather jacket, his hips flat, his black hair thick and strong. The smile faded.

Just outside the doorway two girls waited. They moved with him into the hall.

"Say, you sure got her goat, Tim."

"You burned her up." They pressed close to him and giggled.

Tim straightened. "Oh yeah? Well, what's it to yuh? Aw, go to hell."

He pushed them aside roughly and charged down the hall. The girls clutched each other and laughed hysterically.

BENEDICTION

JEANNIE BEGG DIXON

I wish you desolation and despair,
A whining grief which two may well uphold,
Something that you cannot singly bear,
Like bitter music, or like growing old.
This bravery of yours, a stringent chord
Bowing the heart with its fine unity
Is doomed to shatter and diminish toward
A thin song chanted in a minor key.

I patiently endure your edged strength,
Scanning your eyes and mouth for tired pain,
Knowing the time must surely come at length
When sorrow will divide itself again.
I wish you some destroying agony,
That you may have a terrible need of me.

I'VE BEEN READING —

JOHN T. FREDERICK

MID-AMERICAN

Some critics have found fault with Willa Cather in recent years because, as they asserted, in her latest books she had turned her back on the middle west and the materials of her most distinctive work. I do not hold with this criticism. The artist surely has a right to choose what he will do. In the case of such preëminent artistry as Miss Cather's, any implied denial of this right is an excess of impertinence. Furthermore, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Shadows on the Rock* have seemed to me ample justifications, in their own authentic beauty, of the choice of material exemplified in them.

Miss Cather's new volume, however, will silence these adverse critics. In *Obscure Destinies* (Knopf, \$2.50) she has returned to the scenes of *My Antonia* and *A Lost Lady* and to such men and women as people those books. "Neighbour Rosicky," with its profoundly moving and beautiful revelation of an old Bohemian farmer and his family, is strongly reminiscent of *My Antonia*, and on a par with its greatness. I am almost afraid to say how much I like this story. It expresses for me, as definitely as anything I have read and as beautifully, the subtle and profound relation between certain men and the earth which is one of the most significant facts of my experience. The other two stories of the volume, "Old Mrs. Harris" and "Two Friends," also are rich in their realization of meaningful human relationships. All in all, this book is a fine addition to Miss Cather's achievement and to the literature of the middle west.

The Years of Peace, by Le Roy MacLeod (Century, \$2.50), is a fine novel both in substance and in texture. It shows us the making of a farm and a farm community in Indiana in the years immediately following the Civil War, and affords a strong sense of identification with the life of that time. But though its value is high in this historical aspect, Mr. MacLeod's novel is admirable as fiction in even more important ways. The people in these pages are interesting and genuine, freshly and significantly alive. The prose has firm, sound cadences, and every page is lit by vitalizing details. I feel justified in commending *The Years of Peace* very heartily to readers of THE MIDLAND.

Beside these two books, *State Fair*, by Phil Stong (Century, \$2.50), which has been much touted — I believe it was selected by one of the book clubs — is trivial and somewhat tawdry. Some ten years ago Philip Duffield Stong contributed a story to THE MIDLAND — a story chiefly marked by a rich sense of the atmosphere of an Iowa small town in midsummer, and by honest and careful characterization. Mr. Stong has gone a long way since that time. If the blurb which adorns the jacket of *State Fair* is to be believed, this is his thirteenth try at a novel. No doubt he has formed his conclusions as to what the public wants.

At any rate, *State Fair* is a strange hybrid — a work of marked inconsistencies of which I have no doubt Mr. Stong himself is fully aware. For the most part the

farm people and the farm festival are treated with a brisk smartness verging constantly on caricature, to which may be added a sensationalized exploitation of sexual elements, curiously and expertly romanticized and sentimentalized. Yet on the other hand there are moments of real insight into character, and into attitudes not readily understood — as in Abel Frake's discounting of the adulation heaped upon his prize boar, Blue Boy; and there are more numerous and more significant moments of intense, almost mystical response to the land itself.

No doubt my pointing out of this inconsistency may be regarded by Mr. Stong and his press agent as gratuitous and a bit impertinent. But I wish that the rich materials of *State Fair*, and Mr. Stong's very real ability, might have been represented in a sounder book.

CONQUISTADOR

In the hands of Archibald Macleish poetry becomes increasingly a matter of sensations which impinge upon what the old-fashioned psychologists would have called the intellect as distinguished from the emotions. *Conquistador* (Houghton Mifflin, \$2.50) is almost incredibly brilliant in its rendering of sensory impressions — a coruscation of intense colors and violent movements, a woven clamor of sounds. Nor are these brilliances scattering in effect. As one works his way through the persistent ellipses of Mr. Macleish's modern medium, in a second and a third reading, he finds very definite integration. The book becomes one man speaking — the aged veteran, nearing death, of Cortes' army. Perhaps it is the highest triumph of Mr. Macleish's art that all the fire and color are transmitted to us with the coolness of a mirror; since it is the mind of an old man that turns over his memories — now dim and broken, now bright and full — while his heart is tired.

TWO BOOKS ABOUT POETRY

Two very good books about poetry have come my way recently. The first is the work of a poet who has been a frequent contributor to the pages of THE MIDLAND, Marie Emilie Gilchrist. For a number of years Miss Gilchrist has conducted an informal "poetry club" for young writers in connection with her work in the Cleveland Public Library. *Writing Poetry* (Houghton Mifflin, \$1.50) is an outgrowth of the meetings of this club. In it Miss Gilchrist has put down what the young poets have wanted to know, and has given some interesting specimens of their work. Its source and nature will suggest that this is an eminently practical book, one that will give real, concrete help to the young writer of verse and to his teacher or critic. What might not be implied, but it is also true of this book, is that it is extremely well written, rich with allusions and illustrations, and is abundantly worth reading by the mature student of literature.

Excellent also in a different way is L. A. G. Strong's

Common Sense about Poetry (Knopf, \$1.50). This book is addressed in part to the person who thinks he doesn't like poetry, and is perhaps intended for readers of poetry rather more than for writers. It is a brilliant piece of work—delightful from page to page, and thoroughly sound. It gives a deal of really technical information about the forms of poetry, but does this so concretely and with so large an intermixture of stimulating discussion of

general aspects and relations of poetry that the whole book is eminently readable. Teachers of literature will find this book especially helpful, I think, in its suggestions of ways to break down the all too common prejudice against poetry. With other readers, they will value the book also on their own account for the stimulus and the significant pleasure they will find in reading it.

BIOGRAPHICAL

THE MIDLAND introduces a considerable number of new writers to its readers in this issue. Of the contributors of stories, only UPTON TERRELL has appeared in the pages of THE MIDLAND before. He is a Chicago writer but has spent much time in the Southwest.

KENNETH C. RANDALL is a teacher of English at Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan. He has published one other story dealing with New England farm life, in the *Prairie Schooner*.

MARY QUAYLE INNIS is a native of Chicago now living in Canada. She has contributed a number of stories to Canadian magazines, but this is her first appearance in the United States.

VIRGINIA MOORE is well known for her poetry. She is the author of the volumes *Not Poppy* and *Sweet Water and Bitter*, both published by Harcourt Brace, and of a third volume which will appear soon. She is a native of Nebraska, but has spent most of her life in Virginia, where she now lives at Scottsville. She has only recently begun to write short stories.

LUISE KELLEY is a librarian now studying at George Washington University. *Clang* is her first story to be

published.

GEORGE ALBEE lives at Hollywood. He has written a novel which will appear soon, and has contributed to *Prairie Schooner*, *Clay*, and especially to *Story*.

K. ELEANOR SALTZMAN is a member of the staff of the State University of Iowa, where she was formerly a student. A story of hers has appeared in *Prairie Schooner*.

GRACE E. KING is a teacher in San Francisco.

Of the poets represented in this number, HOYT HUDSON and JEANNIE BEGG DIXON are already known to our readers through their work published in earlier numbers. HOYT HUDSON has been a frequent contributor to successive volumes of THE MIDLAND. He is Professor of Speech at Princeton University.

JEANNIE BEGG DIXON's *Singing Wheat*, in our July-August number, has had favorable comment from several readers. She lives at Evanston, Illinois.

HAROLD KERR is a young Chicago writer. He has contributed to several of the poetry magazines.

